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(C O R R E C T E D C O P Y) PARAGRAPH 1 CLASSIFICATION
CHANGE TO SBU

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TAGS: [IGAD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: IGAD AMBASSADORS IN ETHIOPIA DISCUSS SOMALIA
INTERVENTION

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 1634

[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 1638

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: At a meeting of ambassadors from IGAD member states and donor partners June 15, the Ambassador of the Somalia TFG to Ethiopia, Abdil Karim Farah, told those assembled that the armed units of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) were advancing toward both Belet Dweyne and Baidoa. He said that the ICU was seeking to capture as much territory as possible to preempt an international intervention. He also claimed that ICU forces were closing cinemas and had shot two soccer fans for watching World Cup matches on television in a Taliban-style crackdown. IGAD Executive Secretary Attalla Beshir called for rapid deployment an IGAD Peace Support Mission made up of Ugandan and Sudanese troops. The ExecSec also declared that "no one is happy to have fundamentalists in this part of the world," and that "the TFG is a baby that belongs to all of us." He expressed openness to any initiative, and strongly urged that IGAD chair Kenya be added to the Contact Group being formed at a meeting in New York June 15. Sudanese and Uganda reps expressed willingness to move quickly to support the TFG militarily; Sudan urged the lifting of the arms embargo. The Ethiopian representative to the AU, Sahilework Zewdie, said IGAD members had a duty "to protect and support a legitimate government regardless of an arms embargo or any other consideration." She added that "we have no time now." The TFG rep stated that the Transitional Parliament had approved international intervention, including that of front-line states like Ethiopia, Kenya or Djibouti, to counter the advance of the ICU. Comment: the above comments gave post the sense that IGAD states -- particularly Ethiopia -- might act militarily in Somalia even in the absence of UNSC approval if the TFG appears to be in jeopardy. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Charge and Pol/Econ Counselor attended the Joint IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) Partners Forum June 15 in Addis Ababa, which was hosted by the Italian Embassy. In attendance were ambassadors or representatives from most IGAD states, including Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda,

Kenya and Djibouti, as well from donor/partner countries including major European nations and Japan. While other issues were dealt with, developments in Somalia dominated the agenda.

IGAD SECRETARIAT: TFG BABY BELONGS TO ALL OF US

13. (SBU) IGAD Executive Secretary Attalla Beshir told the group that neither the international community nor Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) have moved quickly enough to bolster the latter's effectiveness since it emerged from the peace process in 2004. This lack of progress left a vacuum that has now understandably been filled by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). This development had totally changed the scenario in Somalia. Beshir noted that both Somali warlords and the ICU had opposed the TFG. The ExecSec also declared that "no one is happy to have fundamentalists in this part of the world," and that "the TFG is a baby that belongs to all of us."

14. (SBU) He expressed openness to any initiative, but called for close coordination of any initiative through IGAD and the African Union (AU). He strongly urged that IGAD chair Kenya be added to the Contact Group being formed at a meeting in New York June 15. Beshir noted that at their recent meeting in Nairobi, IGAD foreign ministers were eager to move forward with a peace support mission to strengthen the TFG. IGAD had waited for two years for action from the UNSC on the arms embargo, but had seen none. Meanwhile, many countries had intervened in Somalia unilaterally with arms. Beshir argued that a unilateral intervention, or one simply "imported from New York," was bound to fail. Only a regionally supported and coordinated initiative was desirable.

TFG AMBASSADOR: DON'T LET ICU TIGHTEN ITS GRIP

15. (SBU) TFG Ambassador to Ethiopia Abdil Karim Farah stated that while the TFG had been blocked from establishing itself in Mogadishu, the ICU had filled the vacuum of government authority with social service networks, including madrassa schools the distorted the views of a generation of children. Three months ago, he said, the warlords had put together an "anti-terror alliance" to confront the ICU saying openly that they were "working with the Americans." Farah claimed that there had been no "popular uprising" in favor of the ICU, but rather Somalis were simply fed up with the reign of the warlords.

16. (SBU) Now the ICU was advancing toward the central town of Belet Dweyne, the Ambassador said. At the same time, ICU forces were reinforcing for a move toward Baidoa. The TFG, for its part, had no combat equipment and only a lightly-armed militia of 7,000. Farah argued that the IGAD communique of June 13th had prompted the ICU to accelerate its military campaign, trying to capture as much territory as possible in advance of any international intervention. In their wake, they had begun closing cinemas and had shot two soccer fans for watching the World Cup on television, Taliban-style. The TFG rep urged that the international community not allow the ICU to tighten its grip on southern Somalia.

SUDAN AND UGANDA EAGER TO DEPLOY

17. (SBU) The Ugandan Ambassador said the situation in Somalia affected all IGAD members and partners. "It is in our interest to do whatever we can to contain and reverse the current trend by supporting the TFG," she stated. She recalled the example of successful international action in Burundi, and said that "we must do more than we have done so far."

¶18. (SBU) The Sudanese Ambassador echoed the Ugandan's comments, arguing that "we must support the TFG both militarily and politically. How can you tie someone's hands, throw him into a river and expect him to swim." The Sudanese rep stated that if the international community wanted Sudan and Uganda to go in to Somalia, the UNSC must lift the arms embargo. Heavy arms would be needed to confront the current situation. "If we just sit here and keep talking, (the ICU) will advance all the way to Djibouti," he concluded.

ETHIOPIA EVEN MORE WILLING, EMBARGO OR NOT

¶19. (SBU) Ethiopia's representative to the AU, Amb. Sahilework Zewde told the group that the ICU was not monolithic and some elements might be willing to engage the TFG. She also claimed that ultimately clan loyalty would trump allegiance to the extremists. Nonetheless, it was dangerous to allow the collapse of the TFG. "IGAD members must protect and support a legitimate government," Sahilework argued, "and this commitment should not be contingent on an arms embargo or any other consideration." It was important to act as quickly as possible; "we have no time."

¶10. (SBU) TFG Ambassador Farah intervened again to underscore the Transitional Federal Parliament's decision the day prior to authorize international intervention to support the TFG, including from front-line states like Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti. He recalled that warlords "had turned the people against Ethiopia," but the situation had now changed. The Uganda rep chimed in to say that a mission in Somalia would be big and dangerous and Uganda would welcome more help with the job. She also argued for adequate financial support and force size to succeed in a difficult environment.

EUROPEANS AND USG CAUTIOUS

¶11. (SBU) Several European ambassadors interjected notes of caution to the discussion. The Greek ambassador agreed on the need for urgent action, but asked whether there was not time solid preparations and a firm institutional underpinning for intervention. He asked how the UN arms embargo would impact any intervention, and suggested consultations at the upcoming Banjul Summit of AU heads of state in early July. He also wondered whether a new AU resolution would be needed from the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to authorize military action. (NOTE: An AU PSC meeting began immediately after the IGAD meeting. END NOTE). British Ambassador Bob Dewar, for his part, agreed on the need for extension consultations between the Contact Group and the AU/IGAD. Dewar noted that the UN had recently agreed to respond the AU PSC's request to reconsider the arms embargo. The British rep also questioned whether there was a viable cease-fire for a peace support operation to implement. The Swedish Ambassador suggested a high-level meeting of the Combined Monitoring Commission (CMC) to express support for the TFG.

COMMENT: STRONG SENTIMENT FOR MILITARY INTERVENTION

¶12. (SBU) The above comments gave post the sense that IGAD states -- particularly Ethiopia -- might act militarily in Somalia in advance of any UNSC decision on the embargo or intervention if the TFG appears to be in jeopardy.
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